

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6078

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2014

Title: An act relating to recognizing "Native American Heritage Day".

Brief Description: Recognizing "Native American Heritage Day."

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Governmental Operations (originally sponsored by Senators McCoy, Kohl-Welles and Conway).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/23/14, 1/30/14 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/14/14, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6078 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Member; Conway, Dandel, McCoy and Rivers.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: There are 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington. In the 2010 federal census, approximately 90,000 state residents identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Sunday and the following ten days are Washington legal and school holidays: New Year's Day, January 1; Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the third Monday in January; Presidents' Day, the third Monday in February; Memorial Day, the last Monday in May; Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day, the first Monday in September; Veterans' Day, November 11; Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November; the day immediately following Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day, December 25. Washington law also designates several other days honoring particular individuals, groups, events, and principles, but they are not state legal or school holidays. None specifically recognize or honor Native American heritage.

Two states have designated days honoring Native American heritage as state legal holidays: South Dakota, the second Monday in October, and Maryland, the Friday after Thanksgiving

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Day. Alabama has designated the second Monday in October, a state legal holiday, as American Indian Heritage Day, Columbus Day, and Fraternal Day. Eleven other states have designated days, weeks, or months honoring Native Americans, but not as state holidays.

The federal government has occasionally designated days honoring Native American heritage, but not as federal legal holidays. Since 2009 President Barack Obama has annually proclaimed November as National Native American Heritage Month and the day after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The existing unnamed state legal and school holiday on the Friday immediately following the fourth Thursday in November, Thanksgiving Day, is recognized as Native American Heritage Day.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This legislation was requested by Washington tribes. The Makah and Colville tribes support the measure. There are no costs to the state. Efforts have been made to enact national legislation similar to this legislation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator McCoy, prime sponsor; Miguel Perez Gibson, Makah Tribe, Colville Tribes.